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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [CLMT](#) [ENRG](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCE ON THE PRESIDENT'S MAY 31 CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 74417

Classified by A/DCM Thomas J. White for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The Ambassador raised the President's climate change initiative with President Sarkozy's National Security Advisor Jean-David Levitte on June 1. The Ambassador referred to public encouragement from Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Blair, and urged a statement of support from Sarkozy. In his May 6 victory speech Sarkozy had called for U.S. leadership on climate change. President Bush had responded, and it would be important to recognize the effort. Levitte said the call was timely as President Sarkozy would study the initiative -- and other G8 issues -- over the weekend prior to a June 4 press conference to preview Heiligendamm.

¶2. (C) Separately, Econ Counselor raised reftel points with Acting MFA A/S-equivalent for Economic Affairs Jacques Maillard. Maillard said that while President Sarkozy would articulate France's position at the G8, there were several key issues from the MFA's perspective. It would be important to clarify how the initiative would relate to broader-based efforts within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Specifically, U. S. support for commitments at Bali at the end of the year would be critical. The UNFCCC should remain the central element of a global response to climate change, other initiatives should be supportive. Second, putting a price on carbon would allow the market to realize its potential in bringing solutions to the table. This would remain a central part of the puzzle in France's view.

¶3. (C) Maillard noted that the proposed initiative -- and remaining daylight with the EU -- posed PR challenges. Given the media's tendency to see issues in black and white, the European press would view any fuzziness in a final statement bridging U.S. and European differences as a European climb-down.

But inability to articulate a common position would also be viewed as a failure, given that climate change was clearly becoming the headline issue.

STAPLETON